THE POORE MANS HOPE.

A Sermon Preached

BY *JOHN GORE*,

Rector of *Wenden-lofts* in

ESSEX, 1635.

PSAL. 12. 5.

For the oppreſsion of the poore, for the ſighing of the needie, now will I ariſe (ſaith the Lord) I will ſet him in ſafety from him that puffeth at him.

LONDON,

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Perlegi hanc concionem cui titulus, The Poore mans Hope, *in qua nihil reperio sanæ fidei aut bonis moribus contrarium.*

Tho. Weekes, R.P. Ep.
Lond. Cap. Domest.

TO MY
WORSHIPFVLL
And moſt worthy Friend,
Mr. EDMUND WOODHALL
Chiefe Regiſter of the Prerogative
Office in LONDON.

WORTHY SIR,

I Remember how heartily the Apoſtle prayed for his good friend Oneſiphorus; *who had oft refreſhed him, and was not aſhamed of his chaine,* 2 *Tim.* 1. 16, 18. The Lord give mercy to the houſe of Oneſiphorus; *and againe*; The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. *Now whether that good man were willing to have his name, and his goodneſſe made knowne to the world,* I *cannot ſay,* (*very likely his modeſt baſhfulneſſe would not ſeeme to deſire it*;) *But who*

will blame Saint Pauls *good nature, that he did not forget the kindnesse of his friend, as* Ioash *forgat the kindnesse of* Iehojada; *nor would smother his benevolence, as* Hazael *smothered his Master, but remembred him in his prayers, made mention of him in his writings, and besought the Lord for mercy to that house, where hee had found so oft refreshing? In like manner, This is all the poore amends that I can make you (worthy sir) for all your free and noble entertainements, to become your Oratour to God, your Herald to the world, and to requite your courtesies with prayers which shall never be wanting from*

Your poore unworthy Friend,

IOHN GORE.

THE POORE Mans Hope.

PSAL. 37. 25.

I have beene young and now am old, yet never ſaw the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeede begging their bread.

THeſe words are an experiment, or an obſervation of the Prophet *David*, touching the certainety and infallibility of Gods Providence and Goodneſſe to the righteous and their poſterity. Wherein wee may take notice of three generall Points. 1. The time, how long *David* had obſerved Gods dealing and diſpenſation in this behalfe; namely, from his youth to his age [I *have beene young and now am old.*] 2. The parties in whom *David* did obſerve this priviledge, that they were ne-

ver forsaken, and they were, the righteous onely [*I never saw the righteous forsaken.*] 3. The continuance and succession of Gods favour and mercy, that it doth not rest onely upon the righteous themselves, but extendeth and enlargeth it selfe to their posterity and their seed, [*nor their seed begging their bread*] Of these in their order; and first of the time how long *David* had observed Gods dealing with the righteous, namely, from his youth to his age.

1. [*I have been young.*] Here first you may take into your consideration, the holy minority of the Prophet *David*, that in his yong time he began to enter into religious thoughts and meditations touching Gods proceedings with his servants. That time which other young folkes waste and melt away in folly and vanity, or in the pleasures of sinne; that did he dispend and employ in a more serious, and more sacred manner, in devotions, and divine contemplations of the manifold wisdome and works of God. To be a patterne and a president to all young folkes that should come after him, to begin betimes to serve God and follow goodnesse. *Remember thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth* (saith *Salomon*, *Eccles.* 12. 1.) *before evill dayes come.* Old dayes are evill dayes in respect of young dayes; It be the young that be the good dayes, if young folkes had but grace to make good use of them. It was Gods Ordinance, *Lev.* 2. 14. that in their Meat-offerings of first fruits, they should offer *greene eares of corne*, or *corne beaten out of greene eares.* To intimate unto us, that God loves we should dedicate and consecrate our green and tender yeares to his service, and not put it off (as too many doe) to the very Autumne and fall of their lives. It is written in the Gospel, that when Christ heard a yong man say, He had kept the Commandements from his youth, the Text saith, *He began to love him*; to shew how God loves these timely beginnings of grace and goodnes: Yea, I dare say it, that God makes more account of a little goodnesse in a yong body, than of a great deale more in one that is of greater age, as you read, 1 *Reg.* 14. 13. When *Jeroboams* childe was sicke, the Prophet sent him word from God, that he only of *Jeroboams* house should goe to the grave in peace, because in him was found

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some good thing toward the Lord. There could not bee much goodneſſe in him being but a child, and bred in idolatry, yet becauſe there was ſome goodneſſe; ye ſee how God took liking to him, and ſhewed his acceptance by that extraordinary favour towards him. Let this be an encouragement to all young perſons, that are (as the Poet ſpeakes) *Aurorae filii*, ſons of the morning, that have day and life before them, to learn of *David* and *Jeroboams* ſon, to begin betimes to ſet forward to heaven, and make choiſe of Chriſt to be their Guardian in their youth, ſo ſhall they be ſure nere to come to want nor beggery in their age. It was the honor and the happines of *Andronicus* and *Junia* (as we read *Rom.* 16.7.) that they were in Chriſt before *Paul*; and it is the happieſt priviledge and priority in the world to be the firſt in Chriſt, and in the Covenant of grace; for he that is the formoſt in Chriſtianity upon earth, ſhall be ſure to have preferment according to his time both in grace and glory in the heavens. Be ambitious therefore (ye young men) of this high honour and preferment, get into Chriſt as ſoon as poſſibly you can; for if you linger like *Lot* in Sodome, and ſtay till you have gotten an habit, and an haunt in wickedneſſe, you would not beleeve, how hard a maſter you ſhall finde it then, to diſpoſe your mindes, and frame your lives to goodneſſe: Stampe Garlicke in a new morter, and it will ſmell of it ever after; let the devill get poſſeſſion of a child, he will hardly be removed when he comes to riper yeares: as we have an example, *Mark* 9.20. There was an evill ſpirit had gotten ſuch hold of a yong mans body, that the Diſciples with all their power and prayers could not caſt him out; whereupon our Savior perceiving with what extremity he came forth, with what wallowing and foaming, and renting of the poſſeſſed, He demanded, how long that had happened unto him? anſwer was made, *of a child*; if Satan get but handfell in child-hood, he will plead preſcription in age. Therefore let all parents take heed they doe not deale with their children, as thoſe wicked ones did, 2 *Reg.* 17. who offered their children to *Molock*: firſt, they carried them round about the fire, and that was called διαπυρωσις, wheeling about their death and deſtruction: Secondly, they cauſed their

children to passe through the fire, this was called *Lustratio* a purging by sacrifice: thirdly, they put them into the belly of *Molock* (which was an hollow Image of brasse) and burnt them quicke; this was *Vivi-comburium*, burning alive. Too many such graceless parents there are in the world, who first, initiate their children to the devill, when they correct them not; this is (as it were) to carry them about the fire of hell: secondly, when by their evill example they teach them villany as the young Lion learneth of the old Lion to catch the prey, (*Ezech.* 19.) this is (as it were) to make them passe through the fire: they not only teach them evill by their evill example, but applaud and allow them in their wickednesse, and (as the Apostles word is, *Rom.* 1.32.) συνευδοκοῦσι take delight and pleasure in their lewdnesse; that is to put them (as it were) into the armes, into the belly of the devill. This is a wofull training up of children, God forgive and amend all them that use it; and God give all such children grace, to doe as *Salomon* adviseth the young man, *Prov.* 2. 16. *Furto se eripere*, to steale themselves out of the hands and bands of sinne and Satan, and to bind themselves Apprentices to God in their youth, so shall they be sure to be protected, and preserved, and provided for in their age. *I have beene young* (saith *David*) *and now am old, &c.*

[*Now am old.*] You have heard the beginning of *Davids* piety, now mark his proceeding and continuance in well-doing he was no changeling (you see) neither in religion, nor in affection to God-ward, but held on in a constant, setled course of godly-mindednesse, *ita ut cano placeret, quod juveni complacebat* (as one said) so that, that goodnesse which pleased him in his youth, pleased him no lesse in his elder yeares; yong and old he was still the same; still bent and set his heart, to serve, and to observe the Lord. It was the commendation given to *Mnason*, *Act.* 21.16. that he was ἀρχαίος μαθητὴς, *an old disciple*, and it is the greatest honour that can be given to man or woman, to be truly stiled (as he was) An old Disciple; that is, to be a follower of Christ from ones youth, and to continue Christs faithfull servant to ones age. *Age is a crowne of glory* (saith *Salomon*)

mon, Prov.16.31.) When it is found in the way of righteousnesse: that is, when an old man is found to be a just and a righteous man, then he truly deserves reverence; but when a man hath lived to those yeeres, that he comes to have *Caput album*, and *cor nigrum*, a head white with hoary haires, and the heart black with wicked deeds; it is the most lamentable incongruity, and disproportion in the world. It is observed out of *Gen.* 25. 8. that *Abrahã* was the first in all the Scripture that is called by the name of an old man, and yet there were many before him that were much elder in yeeres, and had lived a longer time in the world than he had done: why then should *Abraham* be called an Old man, rather then any of his elder ancestours? *Philo* gives this to be the reason, that it was *propter canitiem virtutũ*, not so much for the age of his body, as for the antiquity of his vertue; though they were elder in yeares than he, yet *Abraham* was elder in grace and vertue than they, and had been a vertuous, a religious man, and had served and feared the Lord, a longer time than any of his predecessours: and for this cause was he written the first old man in the Register of Almighty God. And so at this day; not he that is first Christened, but he that is the first and best Christian, is the eldest man in Gods account, and comes neerest unto him who is the *Ancient of dayes*. Whereas he that is full of dayes and empty of grace, that hath attained *bonum senectutem* (as one saith) a good old age, but wants the main of all, which is, *Bonum senectutis* the goodnesse of old age; who when the harvest of his yeeres is come, doth not bring forth that fruit unto God, of devotion and piety, of wisdome and gravity, of temperance and charity, that is to be found in men of fewer yeeres: Most wretched and miserable is his condition, for he comes (as it were) to the *borders of Canaan*, to the very point of time wherein Gods children make their happy transmigration into heaven, but by reason of his sinnes is thrust backe againe; so that when he should dye and ascend to the place of eternall blessednesse, he dies & descends to the pit of utter darknesse, where is nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth. Such is the miserable condition of that man or woman, whose body is declining to the grave, but

his ſpirit hath not learned to aſcend to God that gave it. You therefore that are aged perſons, πεμβυτεροι, ready and ripe for the grave, learne to reſemble the Sunne, whereof the Prophet *David* ſpeaketh, *Pſal.*104. *Sol novit occaſum ſuum, the Sun knoweth his going downe*; and therefore before his ſetting ſends forth the brighter and the clearer, and the ſweeter beames: ſo you cannot but know that it will not be long, ere the Sun of your life goe downe, therefore before the night of death come upon you, ſend forth ſome beames of light, ſome good prayers to God, ſome good deeds to the poore, ſhew ſome token for good before your death, that it may appear that your ſoules are gone the way of life. And then looke how the Rivers when they come neere the Sea, the tide comes forth to meet them: ſo when your ſoules come neere to heaven, your God and Saviour ſhall meet you in the way, and receive you into thoſe eternall manſions which himſelfe hath prepared for you.

So much for the Time, how long *David* had been an obſerver and an eye-witneſſe of Gods Providence, *ſc.* from his youth to his age. I come now to the obſervation it ſelfe [*Non vidi juſtum derelictum, I have not ſeene the Righteous forſaken.*] Wherein are two things remarkable, 1. The perſons priviledged, and they are the Righteous. 2. The privildge of thoſe perſons, and that is, they are never forſaken.

1. The perſons priviledged, (to wit) the Righteous. Here the queſtion will be where any ſuch perſons are to be found: for it is certain that a righteous man is *Rara avis in terris*, as this world goes. The Prophet once cryed, *O ye Heavens, drop downe Righteouſneſſe*: When Righteouſneſſe (ſaith a Learned man) was taken up into heaven, and the earth was utterly devoid of it. But we truſt in God, the world is not altogether now ſo bad, but that (by Gods grace) there are ſome, though not many righteous perſons to be found amongſt men: but who be they? that deſerve to be ſo called, and ſo accounted? Anſ. I will ſhew you ſome particular inſtance out of the Book of God, what kinde of perſons went under the name of righteous men in the dayes of old, and leave the application to your ſelves.

1. The firſt that ever went under the name of a Righteous man,

man, was *Abel*, of him you ſhall read, *Heb.*11.4. *That he offered a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſſe, that hee was righteous*, God himſelfe teſtifying of it. Now wherein did *Abels* righteouſneſſe conſiſt, or what was it for which *Abel* was accounted righteous? the text ſheweth, it was for that *he offered, uberius ſacrificium*, a richer, a fuller, *a better ſacrifice than Cain*; for *Cain* alſo offered a ſacrifice to God, ſuch a one as it was, but it was a pinching ſacrifice, & the fruits that he offered were ἀδόκιμα, the refuſe of that he had; that which he cared not for himſelfe, that he offered to the Lord; but *Abel* made choiſe of the beſt, and offered the moſt: ſo that his ſacrifice was both more and more excellent than *Caines*, it was better and bigger too; and for this he obtained teſtimony from God that hee was a righteous man. Hence I note, that they which are voluntary and free in their offerings to God, that are willing God ſhould have ἀκροθινια, the beſt and principall part of all their ſubſtance; that hold it in ſcorne (as *David* did) that it ſhould be ſaid, they ſhould worſhip the Lord, and bee at no coſt: theſe are they in the firſt place that deſerve the name of righteous men. Contrariwiſe, they that are of a baſe and niggardly diſpoſition to God-ward, that thinke (as *Iudas* did) every thing to be *perditio*, to be *waſte* and loſt, that goes to the maintenance of the worſhip, and ſervice, & Miniſters of God, they are farre from *Abels* diſpoſition, and conſequently, farre from being Righteous in Gods account.

2 The next Righteous man was *Abraham*, of whom the Apoſtle ſpeakes, *Rom.* 4. 3. *Abraham beleeved God, and this was counted to him for righteouſneſſe.* Now wherein did *Abrahams* righteouſneſſe conſiſt? the Text ſaith, in his faith, in his beleefe of God. God Almighty called him out of his owne Countrey, and made him leave all his friends and meanes behinde him, onely promiſing him to be his exceeding great reward; now if God ſhould have failed *Abraham* when hee was in a ſtrange place, he had been utterly undone; but *Abraham* gave credence to his Word, and wholly caſt himſelfe upon the Promiſe and the Providence of his God, and this was counted to him for righteouſneſſe. Hence I gather, hee that beares a true faith to

God, dares repoſe and caſt and roule himſelfe upon the mercy of his God, and the merits of his Saviour, for the pardon of his ſinnes, the preſervation of his life, and the ſalvation of his ſoule; he that dares truſt his God in a caſe of exigence and extremity; when if God ſhould faile him he were undone by it: I dare ſay that man is a righteous man in Gods account.

3 The next ſhall be *Lot*, of whoſe righteouſneſſe you read, 2 *Pet.* 2. 8. *That righteous man dwelling among the Sodomites vexed his righteous ſoule from day to day with ſeeing and hearing their unlawfull deeds.* Now wherein did his righteouſneſſe conſiſt? the Text ſaith, in vexing and grieving at the unrighteouſneſſe of others. Try thy ſelfe by this. Art thou vexed and grieved at the heart, to ſee the unlawfull deeds, and the ungodly courſes of the world? Doſt thou mourne in ſecret (as *Samuel* did for *Saul*) ſo doſt thou mourne for thoſe, who in mens underſtanding are in the high way to hell and deſtruction; is it an Hazael to thine eyes, and a grief to thy heart to ſee that men ſhould have no more grace nor care to ſerve and feare the Lord, but to diſhonour and provoke him every day; and doſt thou wiſh in ſincerity before God, Oh that it lay in thee to further the cauſe of God, and to hinder the increaſe & growth of Satans kingdome in the world: art thou thus minded, thus affected (as *Lot* was in *Sodome*?) then take it as an undoubted teſtimony to thy ſoule, that God who counted it to him, will count it ſo to thee, for righteouſneſſe. Whereas he that can make himſelfe merry with that which makes God and his Angels ſorry, is farre from *Lots* diſpoſition, and conſequently farre from being righteous in Gods account.

4. Come next to *Job*, who ſaith of himſelfe, *Job* 29 14,15, 16. *I put on righteouſneſſe and it cloathed me*; meaning, that his ſoule was clad with righteouſneſſe within, as his body was clad with clothes without: but how did that appeare? *I was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a father to the poore.* Theſe be the true κριτηρια, the infallible markes and badges of a righteous man. 1. He muſt be eyes to the blind, *ignorantem dirigendo*, (ſaith *Lyra*) by giving counſell, direction, and advice, the beſt he can to them that are ignorant and ſimple, here ſignified

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by the blind, which are not able to guide themſelves without a Seer. 2. He muſt be feet to the lame, *impotentem adjuvando*, by giving countenance, help, and aſſiſtance the beſt he can to them that are impotent and of meane ability, here ſignified by the lame, for he that wants his limbs cannot ſtir without ſome helper or ſupporter. He muſt be a father to the poore, *indigentem ſublevando*, by giving reliefe and protection the beſt he can to them that are deſtitute of friends and meanes, like poore Orphans or fatherleſſe children that are not able to provide for themſelves, nor to live without the charity and the mercy of good-minded people. Theſe are the objects of the care and compaſſion of the righteous, and theſe are the touchſtones and trials of undiſſembled righteouſneſſe: He that lends his eyes to the blinde to direct them, his feet to the lame to ſupport them, and his bread to the poore to ſuſtain them, that's a *Job*-like-diſpoſition, & a righteous man without doubt in the ſight of God.

5. Looke next to *Phineas*, of whoſe righteouſneſſe you may read, *Pſal.* 106. 31. *Phineas ſtood up and prayed, and the plague ceaſed, and this* (ſaith the Text) *was counted to him for Righteouſneſſe.* Now what was it that made *Phineas* a righteous man? It was his praying, or his pacifying of God, for ſo the Greeke word ἐξιλάσατο, ſignifieth, and in the vulgar Latine it is, *Stetit & placavit*, he ſtood up and pacified or appeaſed God, and this was counted to him for rigteouſneſſe. Hence I gather, He that labours to pacifie God by prayer, when he is provoked and diſpleaſed by ſin; he that takes a ſpeedy courſe to reconcile himſelfe and others, and to make attonement with God by a ſound and ſerious humiliation, when hee ſees that wrath is gone out from the Lord; that mans name is ſurely recorded in heaven amongſt the number of the righteous in the Booke of God; wheres he that goes on daily to provoke God, and never goes to pacifie God, is farre from *Phineas* diſpoſition, and farre from being righteous in Gods account.

6. It is ſaid of *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, *Luke* 1. 6. *They were both righteous before God.* How did that appeare? the text ſaith, *They walked in all the Commandements of God*; though no doubt they had many a rub, many a ſlip, many a fall, yet ſtill they

kept on their way, and walked in all the Commandements of God. But how did they walke? the Text saith, ἀμέμπτως, *unblameably*, or unoffensively, *sine querelâ, non sine peccato* (as a Father saith) not without sinne, but without blame; not that God could finde no fault with them, but that men could not charge them with any open crime: and herein consisted their righteousnesse before God. Hence I note, they that make a conscience to frame their lives according to Gods Commandements, to keep themselves unspotted of the world, and to be innocent from the great offence (as *David* speaketh) *Psa.* 19.) so that though they cannot be free from sin, will endeavour to live unoffensively, and to be free from blame; these are surely righteous in Gods acceptance, though they fall short of that Righteousnesse which Gods Commandements doe require.

7 Lastly (to come home to my text) if ye would know what kind of qualited man *David* meant by a righteous man, Hee expounds himselfe in the very next words to my Text, and saith, *He is ever mercifull and lendeth:* There be lenders enough in the world, such as they be, but they be unmercifull lenders, that lend upon usury, whose lending is as unmercifull, and for the most part, as unrighteous as a Robbery. *The mercies of the wicked are cruell* (saith the Scripture) *Viscera impiorum* (as it is in the Originall) the very bowels of the wicked, which are the tendereſt parts about them; and if their bowels be so cruell, Oh how cruell are their Bills and Bonds? if there be cruelty in their mercies, Oh what cruelty is there in their malice? and if their best dealings be so bad, Oh how bad, how vile are their worst? This unmercifull kind of lending is farre from making or shewing a man to be righteous in Gods account. But then there is another sort of lenders (which are the Righteous here spoken of) and they are mercifull *lenders*, that lend according to our Saviours counsell, *looking for nothing againe*; that is, for nothing but their own againe, no advantage, no gaine, no use for their lending; but they lend in meer compassion and mercy to relieve their poore brethren in their need and necessity. *He is ever mercifull and lendeth*, (and marke what followeth)

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His seed is blessed. That which worldly-minded men thinke and imagine to bee the onely meanes to make their children poore and miserable, I meane, liberality and lending to the poore, that the Holy Ghost saith, is the onely meanes to make them rich and blessed; and is so farre from empoverishing and impairing their estates upon earth, that it is the onely way to draw downe Gods blessing out of heaven upon them. As the Prophet *Jeremy* told *Jehojakin*, *Jer.* 22. 15. So long as thy father did helpe the oppressed, and shew kindnesse to the poore and needy, did he not prosper? was it not well with him? so that (as *Chrysostome* saith) We may not thinke that God made rich men onely for the profit of the poore; but God made the poore as well for the profit of the rich; *Make yee friends* (saith our Saviour) *of the unrighteous Mammon*: as if rich men should one day finde, that the poore were their best friends, when they come to be received into everlasting habitations.

By these, and the like examples and instances, you may easily conceive who they be that are counted righteous in Gods acceptation. Therefore as *Elisha* spread himselfe upon the *Shunamites* childe, 2 *Reg.* 4. 34. and applyed his mouth to the childs mouth, his hands to the childs hands, and his body to the childs body, till the childe began to neeze and to revive; so you shall doe well to apply your selves to these patternes and presidents, to see what correspondence and agreement there is betwixt your lives and theirs; and if your disposition be the same with theirs, your acceptation shall be the same as theirs was; and if you be partakers of the same righteousnesse, you shall also be partakers of the same happinesse, (as it followeth in the Text) you shall never be deserted nor forsaken of God; *I never saw the Righteous forsaken, &c.*

As for the unrighteous and ungracious that first forsake God, no marvell if God in Justice forsake them againe, according to that anciently received rule, *Deus nunquam deserit hominem, nisi prius ab homine deseratur*, God never forsakes any man, till that man doe first forsake his God. But for the righteous that cleave close unto the Lord, and hold them fast by God (as *David* speaketh) and will not, if they can possibly, let go their hold-fast, be-

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leeve it, God will be a ſtedfaſt friend to them, and will never faile them nor forſake them, neither in life nor in death, but while they live, he wil be with them; and when they dye, they ſhall be with him.

1 In life, the righteous are never quite forſaken, nor left utterly deſtitute of food & proviſion, and ſuch other comforts which God in his wiſdome ſeeth to be moſt expedient for them. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Eſay* 65.13. *Behold my ſervants ſhall eate, but you,* (that is, the wicked Idolaters, for to them he ſpeaketh) you *ſhall be hungry; my ſervants ſhall drinke, but you ſhall be thirſty, my ſervants ſhall rejoyce, but you ſhall be aſhamed:* ſo that what ever betide the wicked, when the dayes of evill come, God will take order for the righteous, his ſervants ſhall be ſure to be provided for. *In the dayes of famine they ſhall have enough, Pſa.*37.19. that is, enough to content them, though not enough to enrich them; and if their own means chance to faile them at home, God will provide them means and friends abroad, as he told *Elias*, 1 *Reg.* 17. when he was in great diſtreſſe at the river *Beſor*, and had neither meate nor drinke to ſuſtaine him, *The Word of the Lord came unto him, ſaying, Ariſe, get thee to Sareptah which is in Sidon, and tarry there, for behold I have commanded a Widdow woman to ſuſtaine thee there.* *Elias* knew not the widdow, neither did the widdow know him, but God who knew them both had given her a ſecret charge and commandement, that ſhe ſhould ſuſtaine his Prophet, and ſo ſhe did. Thus will God (rather than his own ſhall want) give ſecret charges to thoſe we are not aware of to ſuſtaine and ſupply us at our need; as in *Pauls* caſe, *Act.* 17. when the Ship was broken in pieces which they thought ſhould have carried them to land, the Lord caſt them and conveighed them ſafe to ſhore, upon ſuch boards and plankes, as they did not, nor durſt not expect: ſo when thoſe helpes faile us which we moſt relyed upon, God will ſo provide, that ſomewhat elſe ſhall come in and bring us helpe, which we never thought nor dreamt of. Let the conſideration of this teach us to take out that leſſon of the Apoſtle, *Heb.*13.5. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſſe, and be content with ſuch things as ye have, for he hath ſayd, I will never leave thee, nor*

forſake

forſake thee: If God have ſaid it, we may ſweare it, and pawn our lives and ſoules upon it, that if we live according to his will, hee will never leave us nor forſake us, while there is breath and life within us.

2 As they are ever ſuſtained in life, ſo they are never forſaken in death, but in their laſt extremity when their life is in *extremis labris*, God is alwayes preſent with them, either to relieve or to receive their ſoules. *Marke the juſt man* (ſaith *David*) *and behold the upright, for* (whatſoever his beginning be, yet) *the end of that man is peace.* And againe, *Follow after righteouſneſſe, and doe the thing that is good, for that ſhal bring a man peace at the laſt.*) It was promiſed as a bleſſing to good *Joſiah*, 2 *Reg.* 22. *ult.* that he ſhould be gathered to the grave in peace; and yet we finde in the ſtory that *Joſiah* died in warre. How then was this promiſe made good? I anſwer thus: though he died in warre outwardly, yet he died in peace inwardly; his conſcience was at peace with God, & his ſoul was pacified & diſcharged from the trouble of all his ſinnes; ſo that whatſoever his death was, yet he died in peace. And ſuch is the happines of all the righteous, ſome die by fevers, ſome by the ſword, ſome by the fire, yet all through Gods mercy die in peace. Therefore (ſaith *Balaam*) *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like unto his:* for though it be decreed in heaven that the righteous muſt die as well as the unrighteous, yet there is as great a difference betwixt the maner of their dying, as betwixt the paſſage of the *Egyptians* and *Iſraelites* through the ſame red ſea; which was *aliis ſepulchrum, aliis vehiculum*, a ſepulchre and a grave to the one to drown them in perdition; and a chariot to convey the other, *Sicco pede* without wetting their feet, to the land of Promiſe. This is that which the Apoſtle calls καρπὸν εἰρηνικὸν, *Heb.* 12. 11. *the quiet fruit of righteouſneſſe:* for though the bud and bloſſome of righteouſneſſe, I meane the firſt beginning of grace and Chriſtianity, may be troubled & aſſaulted with difficulties, and doubts, and feares, yet the fruit is alwayes quiet, and the end is alwayes peace: ſo that the Righteous while they live, they live to the Lord; & when they die, they

die in the Lord; ſo both in life and death, the Lord is theirs, and they are his; they never forſake the Lord, nor doth the Lord ever forſake them. [*I never ſaw the Righteous forſaken.*]

Ob. No, may ſome ſay? Did *David* never ſee the righteous forſaken, as when he himſelf cried out, *Pſa.* 22. 1. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me, and art ſo far from my help?* And doth not *Sion* it ſelf which is the Church of God, and mother of the faithfull, complaine in like manner, *Eſay* 49. 14. *The Lord hath forſaken me, and my God hath forgotten mee.* And did not our bleſſed Savior, who was righteouſneſſe it ſelfe, when he was in that bitter paſſion on the Croſſe, and ſuffered thoſe ἀγνωστα παθηματα, thoſe unknown & unexpreſſible torments, did not he cry out, to the amazement of men, and horrour of Angels, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* How then can *David* ſay, *He never ſaw the Righteous forſaken?*

Anſ. I anſwer in the words of a Father, *Quoſdam deſerit Deus, quoſdam deſerere videtur*; ſome, God doth indeed forſake, as he did *Saul* and *Judas*, and ſuch others, becauſe they had indeed & in earneſt forſaken and caſt off the Lord: other ſome God doth but only ſeeme to forſake, as he did *David* and *Sion*, and his owne bleſſed Sonne our Saviour. As when ſome tender mother will ſeem to forſake her child, and goe aſide, and hide her ſelfe, onely to try whether the child will moane after her or no, and then hearing the childs moaning ſhe is wont to make the more of it, than ſhe did before. Thus it pleaſeth God many times to hide himſelfe (as the Prophet ſpeaketh, *Eſay* 45. 15.) *Thou O God hideſt thy ſelfe, O God, the Saviour of Iſrael*: but it is only to ſee whether we will make any moane after him, and lament after the Lord (as the *Iſraelites* did) and groane and grieve for his departure.

Therefore as our Savior, when he heard them ſay, *He whom thou loveſt is ſick, Joh.* 11. 3. he anſwered, *This ſickneſſe is not unto death*; ſo when it may be ſaid, He whom God loveth is forſaken; it may be anſwerd, this forſaking is not unto death; but when they ſeeme in the ſight of others, and in their own ſence and feeling to be moſt rejected, and leaſt regarded of God, then is God neereſt to their help and ſuccour.

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In a word, there is a twofold desertion, the one in sin, the other in punishment; God may leave the righteous to either or both of these, that is, he may suffer them to fall into some grievous sinne, or he may suffer them to lie long under some grievous punishment, and yet not forsake them neither.

1 Desertion in sin, is when God withdraweth the assistance of his grace, and leaves the righteous to fall into some great offence, as he did *David* and divers others: and of *Hezekiah* it is said, *totidem verbis*, 2 *Chro.* 32. 31. *That God left him, to try out all that was in his heart*; not but that God knew all before; but *Hezekiah* did not know so much by himselfe, nor would not beleeve, that he had so bad, so base an heart, till he tried it and found it by wofull experience; therfore God left him to himselfe, to pull downe the pride of his heart, and to make him humble and vile in his own eyes. Thus God left Saint *Peter* (as you know) but wherefore did he leave him? Our Saviour saith, it was but onely σινιάσαι, *Luke* 22. *to sift, and winnow him as wheat*: look then what winnowing is unto the wheat, a meanes to cleanse and purge it from drosse, and dust, and chaffe; the same is temptation and sinne to the righteous, a meanes through Gods mercy and their owne repentance, to make them more clean, more holy, more humble in the sight of God. And for this cause I suppose, that God, who if he pleased could easily withhold the righteous from sin, doth yet in his wisdome, leave them to themselves, and let them fall, that by falling they may have experience of their infirmity, their infirmity may draw them to humility, humility brings them home to God, and in God they have their *quietus est*, a free and full discharge from all their sinnes.

2 Desertion in punishment, is when God casts the righteous into tribulation and anguish, and then seemes to leave them, and neglect them, and take no notice of the burthen that lies upon them, as you read, *Judg.* 6. 13. the *Angel* of the Lord came unto *Gideon* and said, *God is with thee, thou mighty man of valour*; *Gideon answered, Alas Lord, if the Lord be with us, how then is all this evill come upon us?* that good man could not perswade himselfe but that God had quite forsaken him, when he

saw there was so much evill come upon them; he thought that Gods goodnesse, and their evils, his mercies and their miseries had beene incompatible, and could not have consisted nor stood together. But *Gideon* was mistaken in that, and so are the Righteous many a time and oft, when they measure Gods presence by prosperity, and his absence by adversity. For God is not absent when he punisheth, but only seemes to withdraw himselfe and his favour, that the Righteous might draw neerer, and creep closer to God, as one that shivers of an Ague drawes neerer and creepes closer to the fire.

Thus you have seen the priviledge of the Righteous, that notwithstanding their sinnes, and notwithstanding their punishments, yet they are never wholly deserted nor forsaken of the Lord.

I come now to the last part of my Text, and that is, The continuance and succession of Gods favour and mercy, that it doth not rest onely upon the Righteous themselves, but extendeth and enlargeth it selfe to their posterity, and to their seed [*Nec semen ejus quærens panem, nor their seed begging their bread.*]

This shewes the gracious descent and propagation of Gods blessing when it alights: Like the Oyle that was powred on *Aarons* head, it wet not his head and his beard alone (as *David* speaketh, *Psal.* 133. 2.) but went downe to the skirts of his cloathing; so the mercy and loving-kindnesse of the Lord, doth not rest and remaine onely upon the head of the Family, upon the Righteous parents, but descends and runnes downe to the utmost of the posterity, and is derived from them unto their seed. Here then come in two Points worthy to bee resolved. First, who are meant by the seede of the Righteous. Secondly, whether none of the Righteous seede ever came, or ever shall come to beggery.

1. The Scripture speakes of a twofold seed, *Genesis* 3. the seed of the woman, and the seed of the Serpent; that

is,

is, an holy ſeed, and unholy ſeed; by the one are meant the Generation of the Righteous, by the other, the Generation of Vipers, (as *John Baptiſt* calls ſuch Reprobates, *Matthew, Chapter* 3. *verſe* 7. who like Vipers, eate out the very bowels of their Parents, that is, waſte their ſubſtance, grieve and gnaw their hearts, and are a meanes (as *Jacob* ſaid, *Geneſ. Chap.* 44. *verſe* 31.) to bring downe their hoary head with ſorrow to the Grave. Now it ſeemes to mee, that this *Semen* in my Text, this *ſeed* here ſpoken of, is principally, if not ſolely and onely meant, and to bee underſtood of the Holy Seede, of the Righteous Generation, that is, of ſuch Children as are of the ſame Religion, and of the ſame Righteouſneſſe that their parents were. For if you marke the Scripture, you ſhall finde, that wicked and ungracious children, though they be begotten of righteous and religious parents, yet they are not eſteemed, nor accounted as their ſeed: As you ſee, *Gen.* 16. 12. that *Iſhmael*, that ungracious youngſter, whoſe hands was againſt every man, and every mans hand againſt him, Hee is called the Seed of *Hagar*, not the Seede of *Abraham*, though hee came out of his loynes, as well as out of her wombe, only becauſe the promiſe of bleſſing was not made to him but to *Iſaac*; who is therefore called the childe of promiſe: and *Rom. Chapter* 9. *verſe* 7. 8. Wee have an expreſſe place for to prove, *viz. That the Children of the Promiſe onely are counted for the Seede*; Others, though they come of Righteous parents according to the fleſh, yet in Gods account they are not reckoned for their Seed. And therefore *Cajetan* hath a good conceit upon that promiſe of God to *Abraham, Geneſis, Chap.* 13. *verſe* 15. *The Land which thou ſeeſt, I will give unto thee, and to thy ſeede for ever.* It is (ſaith hee) as if the Lord had ſaid, *Quandiu erit ſemen tuum, &c.* as long as they ſhall bee thy Seede, I will give them this Land; therefore when they beganne to degenerate from *Abraham*, both in faith and in good life, and were not his right Children (as our

Saviour told the Jewes, *Joh.* 8.) but rather by their wicked manners, the children of the devill; God was no longer tyed to his promise, but did disinherit them of that good Land which they might still have enjoyed, had they continued to be *Abrahams* seed, and followed the steps of his righteousnes. The like place we have, *Psal.* 132. 11, 12. The Lord swore unto *David*, of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy Throne (that is) one of thy children shall still succeed thee in thy kingdome; but mark what kinde of children God meant; onely such as should keep his Covenant, and do as their father had done, *If thy children will keepe my Covenant* (saith God) *and my Testimony as thou hast done, their children also shall sit upon thy Throne for evermore:* so that the promises of blessing, though they seeme to be made promiscuously to all the children of the righteous, yet are they peculiarly restraind to such as only tread in the steps of their parents vertues: therefore in the Jewish *Talmud*, an ungracious son is called (*Ben ve lo ben*) *filius & non filius*, a son and no son; as an *Eunuch* is said to be a man and no man, and a Bat a bird and no bird, and a Pumise a stone and no stone; so a disobedient childe, is a childe and no child; a childe according to the flesh, no child according to the Spirit; a childe in mans account, no childe in Gods. It is storied of *Augustus Cæsar* that hee had three untoward sonnes, whom he used to terme *tres vomicas & tria carcinomata*, his three impostumes, or his three ulcerous cancers; they were such an eye-sore, and an heart-sore unto him: so may all ungracious children be truly termed, as being no better than ulcers and cancers to those that breed and bring them up, as *Esau* was to *Rebeccah*, *Gen.* 26. *ult.*

So that on the one side, whereas it is said, *God will visit the sinnes of the fathers upon the children*; it is meant only of wicked children, such as do *patrizare*, & follow the track of their parents wickednesse, and so draw upon themselvs their just-deserved punishments; so on the contrary, whereas it is said in my text, that God will never forsake the righteous nor their seed; it is meant only of good children that follow the coppy of their parents righteousnesse, and so bring themselves within

in the compaſſe of their parents happines. It is indeed a great happines to be born and bred of righteous parents, for as many a good child ſmatts for his fathers wickednesſe, ſo many a bad one fares the better for his fathers goodnes, as *Cham* was ſaved in the Arke, not for his owne, but for his fathers ſake. And I do verily beleeve, that the more vertuous predeceſſors a man hath, the greater mercies he ſhall receive, as the bleſſings of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* & *Jacob*, all three together were more available for their poſterity, than if there had been but one ſingle of them: therfore *Jacob* ſaith to *Joſeph*, *Gen.* 49. 26. *The bleſſings of thy Father ſhall be ſtronger then the bleſſings of my elders*; for he had his fathers bleſſing, and all the reſt concurring therewith: as on the contrary, I feare, that the more evill Anceſtors one hath, the greater puniſhment he ſhall receive, if his own ſins be alſo added to theirs. Therefore let all children that have good parents, thank God for them, be obedient unto them, and take heed they doe not degenerate frō them; for as it little benefits a river to come from a clear ſpring, if it ſelf be muddy; or as it little benefits a blind man to ſay that his parents could ſee, or a feeble man, that his parents were ſtrong; ſo its little comfort, and leſſe credit to any young perſon, that his parents were worthy and vertuous, if he himſelf be unworthy and vicious: for this bleſſing which is here reported of the ſeed of the righteous, belongs (you ſee) of right, to none but to the righteous ſeed (that is) to ſuch children as are righteous and religious as their parents have been; for the other in Gods account are none of their ſeed.

2 The laſt queſtion is, whether none of the Righteous ſeed ever did come, or ever ſhall come to beggery, becauſe *David* ſaith, *He never ſaw their ſeed quarentes panem, ſeeking or begging their bread.* I dare not but ſay, that this generall rule may admit of ſom exceptions; for we know that *Lazarus* was a righteous man, for immediatly upon his death his ſoul was conveied by *Angels* in *Abrahams* boſome, and yet he lay begging at *Dives* gate. So was *Bartimeus* (no doubt) a righteous man, for our Savior gave teſtimony of him, *that his faith had made him whole* and yet he begged by the high-way. So though it do not ſeem

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to hold *in singulis* in all particulars, yet *ut plurimum* for the most part, it is a rare unusuall thing to see a righteous body come to beggery. *David* in all his time never saw it, and I beleeve the oldest man alive cannot point out many instances. But (I take it) the Prophets meaning is this; *that he never saw the righteous nor his seed* forsaken of God, though they did beg their bread, that is, though they should be driven to that hard exigent as for a time to beg their bread, yet even in that extremity God would not forsake them, but bee graciously present with them, to sanctifie their poverty unto them, and to give them a comfortable enjoyment of that very bread and food, which the exigency of their hard condition had constrained them to beg for; I say, though they should on some extremity be enforced to make their wants known, and seek relieſe as beggers doe, yet their God whom they serve will never leave them to that scarcity, as to make a trade and profession of common beggery. As S. *John* saith in another case, *He that is born of God cannot sin*, (the word is ποιεῖν ἁμαρτίαν) cannot be a workman or an artificer of sin, he cannot follow his sinne, as a workman followes his trade; but some time or other he shall break off his sinnes by repentance, and turn to God by reformation: So he that belongs to God, cannot, shall not beg his bread, so as to make a trade and profession of beggery, God wil surely raise them up some friends or meanes to sustain them for the present, and to put them into a better course for the time to come. For it was one of the greatest curses that *David* could ban the enemies of God withall, *Psal.* 106. *Let their children bee vagabonds and beg their bread, let them seek it also out of desolate places*; where no bread is to be had; now surely God will provide better for the children of the Righteous, then that this should bee their lot. Consider the *Ostritch* (saith *Job* 39.13. God hath taken understanding from her, and she leaves her young ones behind her, and provides not for them, but forgetteth them as if they were not hers: how comes it then that they grow up, and that the *species* is not extinguished, but continues? Surely, because God takes care for them, and nurseth them up.

up. So the *Hinde* that is in the wildernesse, as shee calveth, shee bringeth her young, and casts forth her sorrowes, and there leaveth them; who now should provide for them, but onely God? So they say of the Raven, that when her young ones are newly hatched, shee flyes away and leaves them destitute of food, and there they lie in the nest croking and crying, ready to starve for want of sustenance, but that God takes pitty upon them, and createth a worme out of their excrements, which crawleth into their mouthes, and so feeds them, and keepes them alive; therefore it is said in the *Psalme*, God feedeth the young Ravens that call upon him. Now if God bee so gracious as to feed young *Ostritches*, and *Hindes*, and *Ravens*, much more will hee feed young children, and Babes, and infants, that call upon him. *My father and my mother forsooke mee* (saith *David*, *Psal.* 27.) *and the Lord tooke mee up*: In the Originall the word is, (*Asuph*) *I was a foundling*, like a lost childe that was left by the Parents and found by the Parish: Such was *Davids* case (it should seeme) for a time, and the Lord tooke care of him, and brought him up: so will God provide that none of the Righteous seed shall be lost or perish for want of looking to, but hee will finde them himselfe, and set some good body or other to finde them out, as hee set *Pharaohs* Daughter to finde out *Moses*, and to nurse him up at her owne cost: One way or other God will take order for their seede and posterity, that they shall never come to utter want and beggery.

What then is to bee thought of our common beggers? Are they all ungodly? are they all unrighteous? are they all the seed of Reprobates? I dare not say so; there may bee some that belong to the election of grace among them, else God forbid. Wee reade in the Gospel, that some were called in out of the high-wayes, and from under hedges to the Wedding-Dinner of the Lord, which is doubtlesse meant of Beggars that lay lurking thereabouts; and marke what the Lord of the Feast saith to his servants,

Coge intrare, compell them to come in; they came not in alone, but by compulsion; and so may our common beggars by compulsion perhaps be brought to goodnesse; as *Seneca* obserues that such licentious persons have sometimes beene amended, *per disciplinam & metum*, by correction and feare, *nunquam sponte*, never of their owne accord. But generally as they are suffered and let alone, they are the very filth and vermine of the Common-wealth, I meane, such as have health and strength, and limbes, and are able to doe good, worke and take paines in an honest calling, yet rather chuse to wander up and downe the Countrey, and spend their dayes in a most base ungodly course of life; they are indeed the very *Sodomites* of the Land, children of *Beliall*, without God, without Magistrate, without Minister; dissolute, disobedient, and reprobate to every good worke. And therefore no marvell that God in his just judgement doth let such Runnagates *continue in scarcenesse*: for if they would seeke their meate at God (as *David* saith the young Lyons doe) God would take such order, that they should not alwayes be to seeke for their meate, as now they are; if they did but begge their daily bread of God (as our Saviour teacheth us in his Prayer) God would surely provide them bread, that they should neede to begge it of none else but him; but as they restraine their prayers from God, so God restraines his blessing from them, and lets them like Runnagates continue in scarcenesse.

But now for the Seede of the Righteous, they have a speciall relation to God, and God hath a speciall regard to them, as being the Lambes of his owne Flocke, the members of his own Sonne, and the children of his own adoption; and in that respect, Heaven shall want power, and earth want meanes, before any of Gods owne children shall want maintenance: Let the world bee never so hard, Corne never so deare, and their meanes never so small, that God that multiplyed the widdowes Oyle, will adde such a blessing to that little which they have, that like a Spring it shall continually feede them,

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and keepe off beggery from ever comming on them. Here then is a comfort to all poore pious Parents that have little or nothing to leave their children but onely prayers and blessings; God who is Rich in mercy to all that call upon him, will bee a Father to thy children, a Guardian to thy Orphans, and while thou art above with God in glory, God will bee beneath with them in mercy, that they shall never feele such want, nor fall to beggery. It is a blessing promised to the poore, *Psal.* 107. 41. *That God will make them families like a flocke of sheepe*; which implyes, that they shall thrive with a little maintenance, even as sheepe grow fat and gather flesh and fleeces, though the plaines and leas they feed on, be but bare and short.

I know that generally all parents have a naturall desire that their children should prosper and doe well, when they themselves bee dead and gone. *Oh that Ishmael might live in thy sight* (saith *Abraham* to God,) Oh that thou wouldst bee pleased to take him into thy favour and mercy, that hee may never cast off thee, nor waste his meanes, and so come to want and beggery. Now if thou wouldest bee upon a sure ground for thy childrens welfare, labour to become a righteous man thy selfe, and to bring thy children to righteousnesse too, and then there is no feare, but all shall bee as well as thy heart can wish: for it is not wealth and money, but it is honesty and piety, that must keepe a mans seed from want and beggery; it is not rents and revenewes without, but it is Righteousnesse and Religion within, that entailes Gods blessing to thy childe, and keepes the begger from the doore. This then is the onely comfort, that though parents shall not know how their children fare when themselves are dead and gone (*For Abraham our father is ignorant of us, and Israel knowes us not, Isa.* 62. 16. Lo, the Father of the faithfull above knowes not his owne children, till they come into his bosome, nor how the world goes with them: and *Job* 14. 24. *His sonnes come to honour and he knoweth it not, and they are brought low, but hee perceiveth it not of them*) I say, though the

20357

righteous shall not know what becomes of their children when that themselves are gathered to their fathers in peace; yet here's the comfort and the assurance that they have in God, that if they have brought them up in the feare and nurture of the Lord, and see them towardly and well-disposed to goodnesse, they may comfortably depart without feare of their miscarriage, for as God hath been a Father to them, so he will be to their children, and though they leave them behinde on earth, they shall finde them againe in heaven.

At which blessed Center God of his mercy grant we may all one day meet, where we shall never be divided any more, but shall live together, and love together in eternall solace, in eternall felicity world without end. *Amen.*

FINIS.